

Urban Limit Line / Greenbelt Study General Plan Amendments

1. Amend the General Plan Glossary to add definitions for Greenbelt and Urban Limit Line and to amend the definitions for Sphere of Influence and Urban Service Area, as follows:

Greenbelt: The purpose of areas shown as “Greenbelt” on the Greenbelt Diagram is to help physically define the City in terms of distinguishing between rural and urban character, to identify areas where the City and County intend to focus efforts to minimize the impacts of rural development, and to identify selected locations where acquisition of open space easements or land in fee title will be pursued by the City or other public agencies. The Greenbelt includes public spaces and private properties that have importance for one or more environmental reasons, including visual prominence, earthquake hazard-related limitations, and steep slopes. The Greenbelt areas are non-urban lands which are located primarily in the unincorporated County area, outside of the City. Identification as Greenbelt does not change the development potential or restrictions imposed under applicable Santa Clara County or City development policies and regulations.

Sphere of Influence: The possible ~~probable~~ ultimate physical boundaries, and service area or area of influence of the City, as determined by LAFCO. Not all land within the Sphere of Influence is intended for future urbanization. Some areas within the Sphere may receive some, but not full urban services, by the City. All land within the Sphere bears relation to the City’s planning activities.

Urban Limit Line: The Urban Limit Line (ULL) separates urban and future urban areas from rural areas. The ULL is a longer-term version of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and is intended to reflect the City’s long term policy for growth of Morgan Hill, beyond the twenty-year timeframe of the UGB. The purpose of an ULL is to encourage more efficient growth patterns, minimize public costs, and protect environmental resources. Some, but not all, of the land outside the ULL has been identified as Greenbelt.

Urban Service Area: The area within the ~~Sphere of Influence~~ Urban Growth Boundary where utilities such as gas, water, sewer, and electricity, and public services such as police, fire, schools, and parks and recreation are and will be provided.

2. Amend the introductory paragraphs to the Urban Growth Boundary section of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and Urban Limit Line (ULL)

In 1996 the City Council adopted a long-term Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which differentiates land within the Sphere of Influence intended for future

urbanization from land intended to remain rural and unincorporated for the next 20 years. Prior to urbanization, large-parcel uses, including farming, are encouraged on land inside the UGB but outside the city. Existing and limited new rural residential uses as well as agricultural and open space uses are appropriate for preserved on all lands outside of the UGB.

The Urban Limit Line (ULL) was established as part of the Urban Limit Line / Greenbelt Study and includes lands which may be needed for City growth beyond the next 20 years. Establishment of this line was necessary to ensure that areas which are planned to become part of the City's Greenbelt will not be needed for future City growth. Some, but not all, of the land outside the ULL has been identified as "Greenbelt" areas. There is no timeline for adding unincorporated land that is inside the ULL to the City. Some unincorporated land may not be added to the City for more than three decades. The Greenbelt is described in the Greenbelt section of the Open Space and Conservation Element and in the Community Development Element.

~~Agriculture has been important to the city as an industry and employment generator throughout its history, in addition to contributing to the city's rural character. Agricultural development policies intend to retain the historic agricultural character of lands surrounding Morgan Hill, and to minimize conflicts between urban development and agricultural uses. (This paragraph to be moved to the Agriculture section of the Open Space and Conservation Element)~~

3. Amend Goal 3 of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

Goal 3. A long-term Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Limit Line around the city

4. Amend Policy 3a. of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

3a. The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) should be maintained for the City of Morgan Hill, in order to: a) identify ~~differentiate~~ lands within the Morgan Hill Urban Limit Line Sphere of Influence (SOI) ~~which are intended for future urbanization in the future from those intended to remain rural and unincorporated over an approximately 20 year time period~~; b) provide greater stability of future land use patterns than is currently provided by the existing "short term" urban service area (USA) boundaries; c) indicate the preferred extent and direction of the city's future urban expansion and capital improvements planning, consistent with the City General Plan; d) encourage compact and concentric urban growth and development; e) promote fiscal responsibility, cost-effective service delivery, and the City's ability to plan for and adequately maintain urban services over time; f) provide for an adequate land supply necessary for sustainable economic growth; g) compensate for the impacts of the city's historical patterns of urban growth; h) achieve greater compatibility of land use planning and decision-making for lands of mutual interest to the City and County; and i) provide

additional certainty to rural landowners needed for purposes of planning investments and maintaining viable agricultural operations.

5. Amend Policy 3b.of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

3b. Allow Urban Service Area expansions only within the long-term UGB and for lands with urban designations; the timing and extent of Urban Service Area expansion shall remain consistent with established Urban Service Area expansion policies and ordinances. (Note: Residential Estate and Single Family Low lands outside the UGB south of Watsonville Road are anticipated to provide needed residential development beyond the timeframe of this General Plan update,~~while maintaining the option of establishing a greenbelt in that area.~~)

6. Add Policies 3d. and 3e. to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

3d. Establish and maintain an Urban Limit Line (ULL) around the City to serve as a longer term version of the Urban Growth Boundary and define the inner limits of potential Greenbelt areas.

3e. The Urban Limit Line should be continuous around the City and located outside of or coterminous with the city limits and Urban Growth Boundary. Greenbelt areas should be located outside of the ULL. The ULL may be located within the city limits so that parks or other incorporated, City-designated open space land at the fringe of the community may be included within the Greenbelt.

7. Amend Actions 3.4 and 3.5 to combine them into a single action to read as follows. Renumber Action 3.6, accordingly.

3.4 Evaluate future proposals to modify the UGB according to established criteria, findings or prerequisites, particularly considering stability and dependability factors, such as the need to maintain a 20-year supply on average of available land for accommodating projected growth. ~~To ensure coordination between relevant land use planning issues and growth management considerations, do not reconsider the UGB location more frequently than in conjunction with a comprehensive City General Plan Update every 10 years or so, unless triggered by the established criteria, findings, or prerequisites. Reevaluation of the UGB location may be necessary in conjunction with the greenbelt study to be undertaken in 2002.~~ 3.5 Compare actual and assumed growth rates every five years and expand the UGB to locations within the ULL to re-establish a 20 to 25-year supply whenever the available land supply within the existing long term urban growth boundary is less than 20 years worth of developable land.

8. Add Actions 3.6 and 3.7 to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

3.6 Upon completion of the Industrial Lands Market Study and/or planning for long-term use of the area east of Highway 101 and south of San Pedro (the

Southeast Quadrant), determine the appropriate location for the Urban Limit Line in that area. Planning for the Southeast Quadrant may occur as part of the next comprehensive General Plan Update.

3.7 When the portion of the Vista de Lomas area that is within the Urban Limit Line is included within the Urban Growth Boundary and planned for development, it should be assigned a General Plan designation which would limit its residential density to one unit per every 2.5 acres.

9. Add Actions 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

7.4 Future development of the forty-acre parcel on Kruse Ranch Lane north of Dunne Avenue should be located such that environmental impacts, including offsite visual impacts, are minimized. To the extent possible, future development should be clustered and located on the lower portion of the site.

7.5 Consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Limit Line / Greenbelt Study Report, enter into an agreement with the owners of 118 acres of land in the area generally bounded by Sunset, Edmundson and DeWitt which would provide for the following:

- a. Construction of four houses on lots which front of Edmundson Ave.
- b. Construction of one house on the property which fronts on DeWitt Ave.
- c. Expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary to include 20 acres adjacent to Sunset Ave. which would ultimately allow for construction of up to 60 houses, consistent with the “Desirable Infill” policy and criteria.
- d. Recordation of open space easements over approximately 86 acres of the property (most of which is located outside of the City) prohibiting any further development of that area.

7.6 The 18-acre property located at the southwest corner of Santa Teresa Blvd. and Watsonville Road should develop at a density which transitions from a minimum one-acre parcels on the southeastern side of the site to approximately two and one half-acre parcels on the southwestern side of the site.

10. Amend the introductory paragraphs to the Edges section of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

Edges

Around much of the City, Greenbelt areas have been identified to define the limits of future urbanization. The character of the limits or edges between urban and rural environments is important to establishing the city's identity and providing residents on either side of the edge with a sense of place. The demarcation from urban to non-urban areas can take two different forms. With a **hard edge**, the urbanized portion of a city ends abruptly, with rural/agricultural lands around it.

With a **feathered edge**, development intensities taper off from higher densities in the city interior to lower densities at the edge, creating a transition from urban to rural. Although they can provide appropriate transitions, feathered edges can make gateways difficult to distinguish. In either case, edges form a boundary between "town" and "country" and limit the potential for unwanted urban sprawl.

11. Add Policy 15d to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

15d. Feathering from higher urban densities to lower rural densities should occur within the city limits. Feathering should begin as development nears the Urban Limit Line.

12. Amend Policy 18d of the Community Development Element to read as follows:

18d. Location and development of parks shall be coordinated with the Open Space and Conservation Element of the General Plan to maximize opportunities for resource protection, Greenbelt creation, environmental education, and passive recreational use of open space where appropriate.

13. Add Policy 18v to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

18v. Where possible, coordinate the location of future parks with Greenbelt areas so as to maximize public open space and recreational benefits.

14. Add Action 18.24 to the Community Development Element to read as follows:

18.24 Investigate the potential for development of hiking trails on the open space/greenbelt areas of El Toro.

15. Amend the Greenbelt section of the Open Space and Conservation Element to read as follows:

Greenbelt

Maintaining the identity of Morgan Hill by providing a non-urban physical separation from San Jose and San Martin has long been important to city residents. ~~An urban growth boundary established in 1996 to slow outward growth of the City and protect its fringe areas is an important first step toward providing that separation. This Plan proposes the logical next step: identification of a specific location for a permanent greenbelt around the City.~~

The purpose of the Greenbelt is to help physically define the City and separate it from San Jose and San Martin. The Greenbelt includes both public open space and private properties. Hillside areas within the Greenbelt include those that are the most visually prominent, as viewed from the valley floor. Edges of several Greenbelt areas are at elevations that reflect the beginning of hillside

environments. Greenbelt areas on the valley floor include Silveira Park, Malaguerra Park and the Coyote Creek Parkway.

Areas outside of the Urban Limit Line that have been substantially subdivided into parcels smaller than 10 acres generally are not included in the identified Greenbelt areas. These areas are primarily located on the valley floor, outside the city limits. Many of the parcels in these areas are developed or are eligible for construction of single-family homes. The existing and potential density of development in these areas minimize their value as Greenbelt areas. However, the rural character of these areas does help to define and distinguish the urbanized city area from other urban and rural county areas. It is desirable for the City and County to coordinate land use planning activities in these areas.

Although not identified as Greenbelt areas, areas outside the ULL that have been substantially subdivided into parcels smaller than 10 acres

Identification of areas as “Greenbelt” does not change the development potential or restrictions imposed under Santa Clara County development policies and regulations. Land uses within “Greenbelt” areas would continue to be agriculture, limited new residential uses, parks and other open space with minimal improvements. The City would work with the County to minimize off site visual impacts of new development. In addition, the Greenbelt is intended to identify areas where a targeted program of acquisition of open space easements or fee title to land may occur.

Identified “Greenbelt” areas are shown on Map 6.

Goal 2. A stable, long-term city boundary reinforced by a greenbelt

Policies regarding Creation of the Greenbelt

2a. Establish and maintain a greenbelt to demarcate the urbanized area of the city from surrounding non-urbanized lands.

2be. Greenbelt areas should ~~define~~ distinguish the urban area of Morgan Hill from San Jose and San Martin ~~adjacent cities~~. The northern and southern boundaries of the city shall be defined by greenbelts to maintain community identity. (SCJAP 16.13)

2c. Protect views of hillsides, ridgelines and prominent natural features surrounding the City. These features help define the City’s historic rural character, sense of place, image and identity.

2d. In the area between Monterey Road and Highway 101 at the northern Sphere of Influence line, existing urban development precludes the City from providing a

non-urban buffer between it and San Jose. The San Jose Coyote Valley Greenbelt, which includes the area south of Palm Ave. and north of the Morgan Hill city limits and is located within the San Jose Sphere of Influence, will provide the non-urban buffer for that area.

2e. Pursue a targeted program for acquisition of Greenbelt land in fee title or conservation easements. Properties that are most threatened with development which, if acquired, would provide significant public benefit should receive the highest priority for acquisition and/or establishment of easement.

2f. Acquire undeveloped parcels as a first priority.

2g. Acquire easements on properties using an approach that would maintain some appropriate development potential, maximize the use of available funds for greenbelt and open space protection, and minimize land management and maintenance costs.

2h. Acquire land in fee title when the City's objectives include allowing public access to the site for recreational or related activities.

2i. Acquire properties and easements on a "willing seller" basis. Eminent domain will not be used.

Policies regarding Location of the Greenbelt

2l. Locate the Greenbelt outside of the Urban Limit Line, where practical.

2m. Greenbelt areas should include steep hillside areas and areas with other severe geologic or environmental constraints which are located outside of the ULL.

2n. Greenbelt areas should include land designated Open Space in the General Plan and located on the fringe of the community.

2o. Greenbelt areas should not include unincorporated areas with residential development on lots of less than 10 acres, except in unusual circumstances.

Policies regarding Uses within the Greenbelt

2q~~b~~. Support County policies of prohibiting commercial and industrial uses (excluding agricultural industry) in the unincorporated and greenbelt areas surrounding the city.

2r~~d~~. The land uses appropriate within a greenbelt, as ~~determined by the South County Joint Planning Advisory Committee~~, might include: a) low-density residential development on lots 10 acres or more in size ~~(i.e. one unit per 20~~

aeres); b) public parks and recreational areas; c) privately operated recreation areas (e.g., golf courses and riding stables); and, d) agriculture. (SCJAP 16.16)

2s. Within Greenbelt areas, parks and other designated open spaces, scenic/open space easements, golf courses, low intensity public facilities involving minimal permanent improvements and agricultural activities are appropriate uses. Existing residential may remain and new residential uses should be located and designed to have minimal visual and other environmental impacts.

2t. Greenbelt areas which are privately owned are not intended for public recreational use.

Actions regarding Creation of the Greenbelt

~~2.1 Work with the County and San Jose to develop a plan for a greenbelt along the expected edge of the urbanized area of the city within two years of adoption of this General Plan action. (completed)~~

~~2.2 The Greenbelt Plan shall include a comprehensive planning effort to evaluate appropriate land uses in the rural County areas surrounding the city. The Plan shall specifically evaluate the potential for an industrial park southeast of the Tennant Avenue/Highway 101 interchange. (completed)~~

~~2.3 In conjunction with the Greenbelt Plan, investigate the need to modify the UGB and/or SOI to support establishment of a permanent greenbelt. (completed)~~

2.14 Use a variety of tools to create a greenbelt, including public acquisition, land use regulation, urban development policy, economic incentives to landowners, open space easements, transfer of development rights, planned cluster development, assessment districts, and dedication of additional lands upon development.

2.2 Develop a comprehensive program for monitoring land uses and acquiring and maintaining certain Greenbelt areas. Components of the program should include staffing and/or contract resources, identification of and securing funding for acquisition of easements and fee title to property, and administration of the program.

~~2.8 Work with Gilroy and Santa Clara County to establish and preserve a defined, permanent greenbelt between Morgan Hill and Gilroy, containing such land uses as low density rural residential, agricultural activities, and recreation areas. (SCJAP 16.15) (completed)~~

2.39 Work with San Jose and Santa Clara County to establish and preserve a defined, permanent greenbelt between Morgan Hill and San Jose in the southern

Coyote Valley, comprised of agricultural uses, rural estates, and the Coyote Park chain. (SCJAP 16.13 & 16.14)

~~2.44~~ Work with San Jose, Gilroy and Santa Clara County to implement plans for the preservation of greenbelts between the cities. (SCJAP 16.22)

~~2.54~~ Work with San Jose, Gilroy and the County to identify and establish a viable source of funding for acquiring and developing regional parks, pathways, and open space. (SCJAP 16.22)

2.6 The highest priority areas for Greenbelt preservation include the east side of El Toro, the Edmundson/DeWitt/Sunset area, and the foothills on the eastern side of the valley north of Dunne Ave.

2.7 The second highest priority areas for Greenbelt preservation include the west side of El Toro and the hill area south of Edmundson.

2.8 The third highest priority areas for Greenbelt preservation include the west side of Paradise Valley, the Baird Ranch (north of Llagas Road), and the Boy's Ranch/Coyote Creek Park area.

2.9 When acquiring fee title or easements, offer property owners fair market value using industry standard appraisal techniques.

Actions regarding Location of the Greenbelt

~~2.12 The Greenbelt plan shall include an evaluation of the prominent hillsides bounded by Edmundson Avenue, DeWitt Avenue, Spring Street and DelMonte/Sunset Drive and properties on the eastern face of El Toro and include strategies for the preservation of these important visual resources. (completed)~~

2.10 The Greenbelt on El Toro should include all lands recommended for open space protection by Action 4.1 of this Element.

2.11 The Greenbelt on the western side of Paradise Valley should include land at or above the 490-foot elevation contour line.

2.12 The Greenbelt for the hill area south of Edmundson Avenue and north of Sycamore Avenue should include land that is outside the current Urban Growth Boundary and at or above the 490-foot elevation contour line.

2.13 Maintain the Boy's Ranch within the Urban Service Area in recognition of the services it is provided, while also identifying it as a Greenbelt area.

2.14 Silveira Park and the City-owned lands along Llagas Creek to the west should be included with the Greenbelt.

Actions regarding Uses within the Greenbelt

~~2.5 Encourage the County to retain low intensity plan designations and zoning in all lands outside of the Urban Services Area boundary until annexation or extension of facilities/services is planned. (Redundant, see Action 2.15, below)~~

~~2.6 Recommend agricultural uses, rural estate zoning and park uses for County projects adjacent to the UGB. (Redundant, see Action 2.15, below)~~

2.157 Support the County maintaining low densities and large minimum lot size requirements for undeveloped areas not planned for urbanization ~~or~~ and lands identified inclusion in a as Greenbelt.

2.16 Actively work with the County to find mechanisms that would provide the City with greater influence over development in the unincorporated areas of the City's Sphere of Influence.

2.17 Within City hillside Greenbelt areas, new development should be subject to a site and design review process that encourages minimizing environmental impacts including minimizing the amount of grading and encouraging location of structures in areas where they are least visible from the valley floor.

2.18 The basic Santa Clara County development review processes should be evaluated, updated and strengthened to achieve greater restriction on visibility, from the valley floor and major transportation corridors, of structures in the hillside Greenbelt areas. This updated review process should result in a minimal review process for structures that are not visible from the valley floor and major transportation corridors, and an extensive review process for structures that are visible.

16. Add a new Map 6 Greenbelt Areas, a copy of which follows as Attachment A. Renumber existing Maps 6, 7, and 8 and textual references to them.

17. Amend the introductory paragraphs to the Agriculture section of the Open Space and Conservation Element to read as follows:

Agriculture has been important to the city as an industry and employment generator throughout its history, in addition to contributing to the city's rural character. Agricultural development policies intend to retain the historic agricultural character of lands surrounding Morgan Hill, and to minimize conflicts between urban development and agricultural uses. (This paragraph moved from the Urban Growth Boundary section of the Community Development Element)

~~Agricultural operations are a key component of both the history and existing semi-rural character of Morgan Hill.~~ Supporting agriculture requires finding

innovative ways to help farming and ranching operations become and remain competitive in an increasingly marginal economic environment.

18. Add Action 4.10 to the Open Space and Conservation Element to read as follows:

4.10 Encourage the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority to designate El Toro as a high priority area for preservation.